

## MEDICAL HEALTH OFFICERS **ALERT**

January 16, 2020

### Coronavirus “2019-nCov” outbreak from Wuhan, China

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An outbreak of atypical pneumonia has been reported from the city of Wuhan, Hubei Province, China with a total of 43 associated cases now confirmed to be due to a novel coronavirus (officially named “2019-nCoV”). The 2019-nCoV is a new coronavirus belonging to the same coronavirus family as SARS-CoV.

Detailed information and updates are available on the BC Centre for Disease web site here: <https://bit.ly/2uWinPD>

#### Reporting of Suspect Cases:

Although the risk to Canadians is considered low, to facilitate early detection and containment we request that clinicians remain alert for possible disease importation by identifying patients with:

- Fever AND acute respiratory illness (with or without pneumonia) AND
- Recent travel to Wuhan, China within 14 days prior to symptom onset, OR
- Another potential relevant exposure (e.g., close contact with someone who was ill and had recently travelled to Wuhan)

Clinicians should notify their Medical Health Officer as soon as possible for guidance in the investigation and management of patients with compatible symptoms and travel history.

#### To report please contact:

**Communicable Disease Unit at 1-866-778-7736 (Monday to Friday, 8:30 to 4:30),**

**or**

**On-call Medical Health Officer at 1-866-457-5648 (Weekdays after 4:30 and Weekends)**

#### Clinical Presentation:

Reported clinical signs and symptoms are mainly fever and dry cough. Some patients report shortness of breath or chest tightness. Chest radiographs have shown bilateral lung infiltrates. About 15-20% of cases have been critically ill with two deaths reported.

Some of the cases had exposure to a seafood market in Jiangnan District which also sold other live animals (e.g. bats, birds, snakes, marmots).

**Transmission:**

Thus far, there is no clear evidence for easy or sustained human-to-human transmission among close contacts or health care workers. However, limited human-to-human transmission cannot be ruled out under certain conditions.

**Patient Testing:**

Please see the attached BCCDC Public Health Laboratory (PHL) guidance for diagnostic testing. It can also be accessed at: <https://bit.ly/2NxAuSy>

Testing requires notification and consultation with the local Medical Health Officer and the BCCDC PHL Medical Microbiologist on-call (604-661-7033).

**Infection Control:**

All patients with respiratory symptoms should use droplet precautions when in a healthcare facility including clinics and physician offices. This includes wearing a surgical mask, and regular hand hygiene.

Healthcare providers should also use contact and droplet precautions during specimen collection and assessment of patients; additionally, an N95 mask and eye protection should be donned during specimen collection (or other procedures) that may be associated with aerosol generation (e.g. nasopharyngeal aspirate).

**Travel Advice for Patients:**

The Public Health Agency of Canada has issued a Travel Health Notice (<https://travel.gc.ca/destinations/china>) for individuals travelling to and returning from China, including recommendations for travellers to Wuhan City.

The Travel Health Notice recommends that travellers avoid:

- high-risk areas such as farms, live animal markets, and areas where animals may be slaughtered;
- contact with animals (alive or dead), including pigs, chickens, ducks and wild birds; and
- surfaces with animal droppings or secretions on them.

The Travel Health Notice also reminds travellers to follow usual health precautions such as washing their hands often and practising proper cough and sneeze etiquette.